



Guidance to permit applicants on contributions to State or local law enforcement agencies to implement manatee conservation measures

For more information, access the interim guidance at:
http://verobeach.fws.gov/manatee_issues/manatee_guidance.htm

- A permit applicant may elect to contribute to law enforcement and awareness activities to ensure that their proposed project is not likely to result in the incidental take of manatees. The contribution must provide for a level of law enforcement and/or awareness for a ten-year period that increases current law enforcement officer-to-boat ratios.
- An applicant may choose to contribute to their local, State or other approved law enforcement agency. Additionally, contributions may also be made to other approved organizations such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). If an applicant elects to provide a conservation contribution as a conservation measure, the applicant must include in the proposed contribution any additional fees required to administratively manage the funds by the entity. For more information on the Manatee Conservation Fund with NFWF, access: http://verobeach.fws.gov/manatee_issues/manatee_guidance.htm
- The Service delineated relative risk areas or counties throughout Florida to determine the conservation measures necessary to ensure that incidental take due to additional watercraft will be unlikely to occur. To locate a specific risk area or county, access: http://verobeach.fws.gov/manatee_issues/manatee_guidance.htm
- The Service calculated a recommended level of increased enforcement per watercraft access point. Currently, Florida has a statewide average of one Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission law enforcement officer per 1,356 registered watercraft. The total number of work hours in a year given a 40-hour work week is 2,080. Dividing this total number of work hours by 1,356 registered watercraft yields a current average of 1.5 hours of enforcement per registered watercraft per year. The annual change in watercraft-related manatee mortality between 1990-1999 averaged more than nine percent.
- In order to not likely cause the incidental take of manatees in high risk counties, the project must provide additional enforcement at a level of the current statewide average plus ten percent ($1.5 + 0.15 = 1.65$ hours) per watercraft access per year for ten years. For applicants choosing to contribute funds to a conservation entity, the contribution amount must be sufficient to provide 1.65 hours of enforcement per year for the ten-year period necessary to ensure that incidental take is unlikely to occur.
- In most cases, single family dock permits allow for the development of two boat slips. The total contribution for high risk counties is \$520 per slip x 2 slips plus administrative cost to provide for 1.65 hours of increased law enforcement per new slip for ten years.

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- Medium risk counties experience approximately ten percent of the total manatee mortality that is measured in high risk areas. Accordingly, projects must provide additional enforcement at ten percent of the level of additional enforcement efforts needed for high risk counties. Based on this percentage, a project in a medium risk area should incorporate, for each watercraft that is provided access, 0.16 hour of enforcement per year over a ten-year period. The contribution amount must be sufficient to provide 0.16 hour of enforcement per year for the ten-year period necessary to ensure that incidental take is unlikely to occur.
- The total contribution for medium risk counties is \$52 per slip x 2 slips plus administrative cost to provide for 0.165 hours of increased law enforcement per new slip for ten years.
- For low risk counties, it is not necessary to include conservation measures as part of a proposed watercraft access project.
- The applicant submits the contribution to an approved law enforcement organization along with a cover letter that includes the applicant's name, the Corps' permit number, the county and risk region where the project is located, the contribution amount including the administrative cost, and a statement identifying where (what county) the funds are to be directed to provide increased law enforcement or some other acceptable conservation measure.
- The applicant submits a project description to the Corps which includes confirmation (copy of cover letter sent to law enforcement organization) that the conservation measure has been incorporated into the project as described above. Included in the project description is a statement identifying where (what county) the funds are to be directed for increased law enforcement or some other acceptable conservation measure. The documentation may be copied to the Service.
- It should be noted that permit applicants for watercraft access projects, other than single family applicants, choosing to contribute to a manatee conservation fund must meet certain prerequisites to ensure that incidental take is unlikely to occur as a result of their particular project. For more information, please access the interim guidance as indicated above.